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CANADA
THE MASK
THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES

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THE MAXX™

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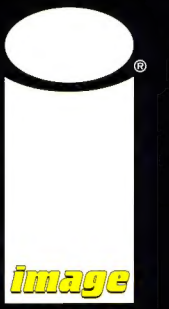
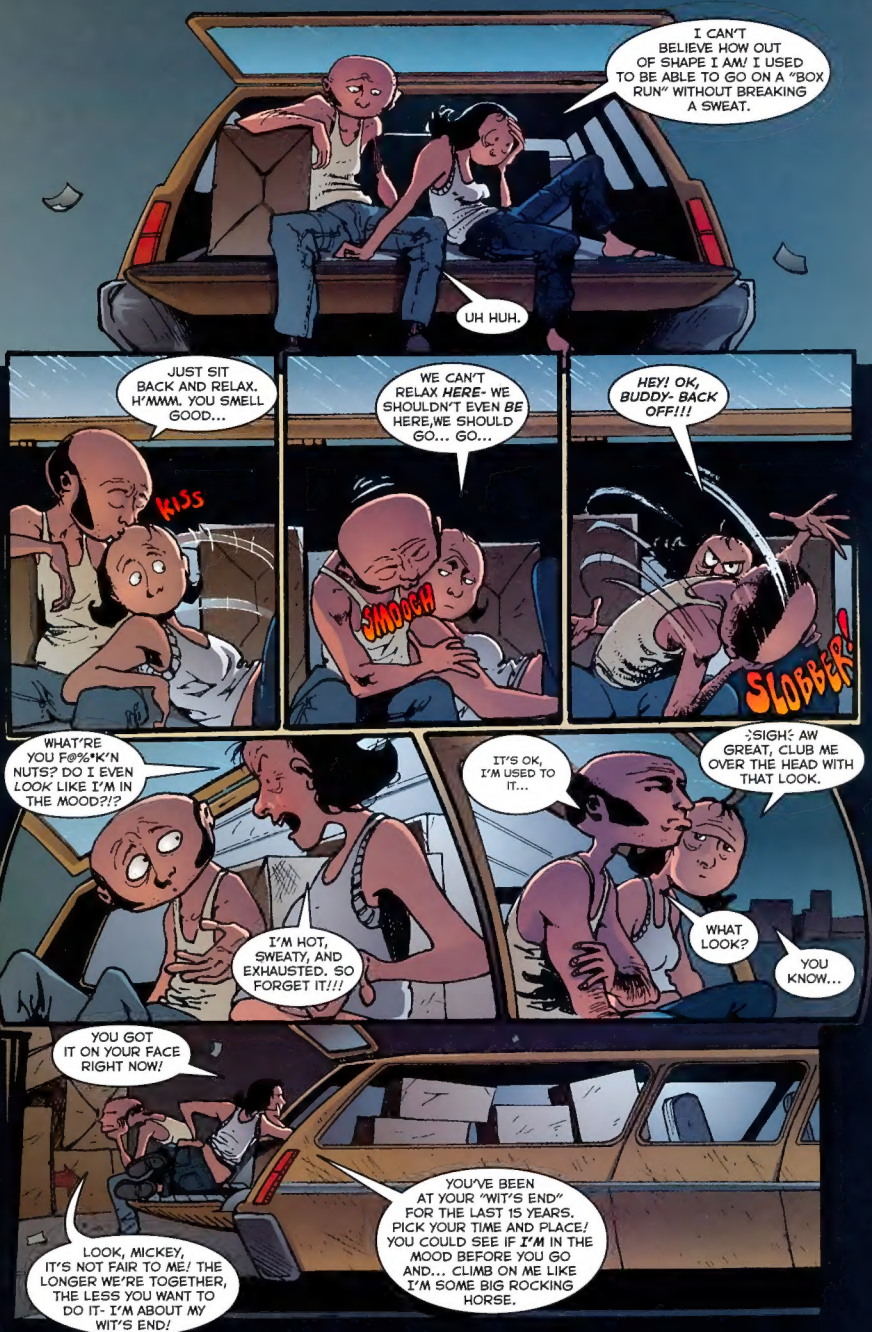
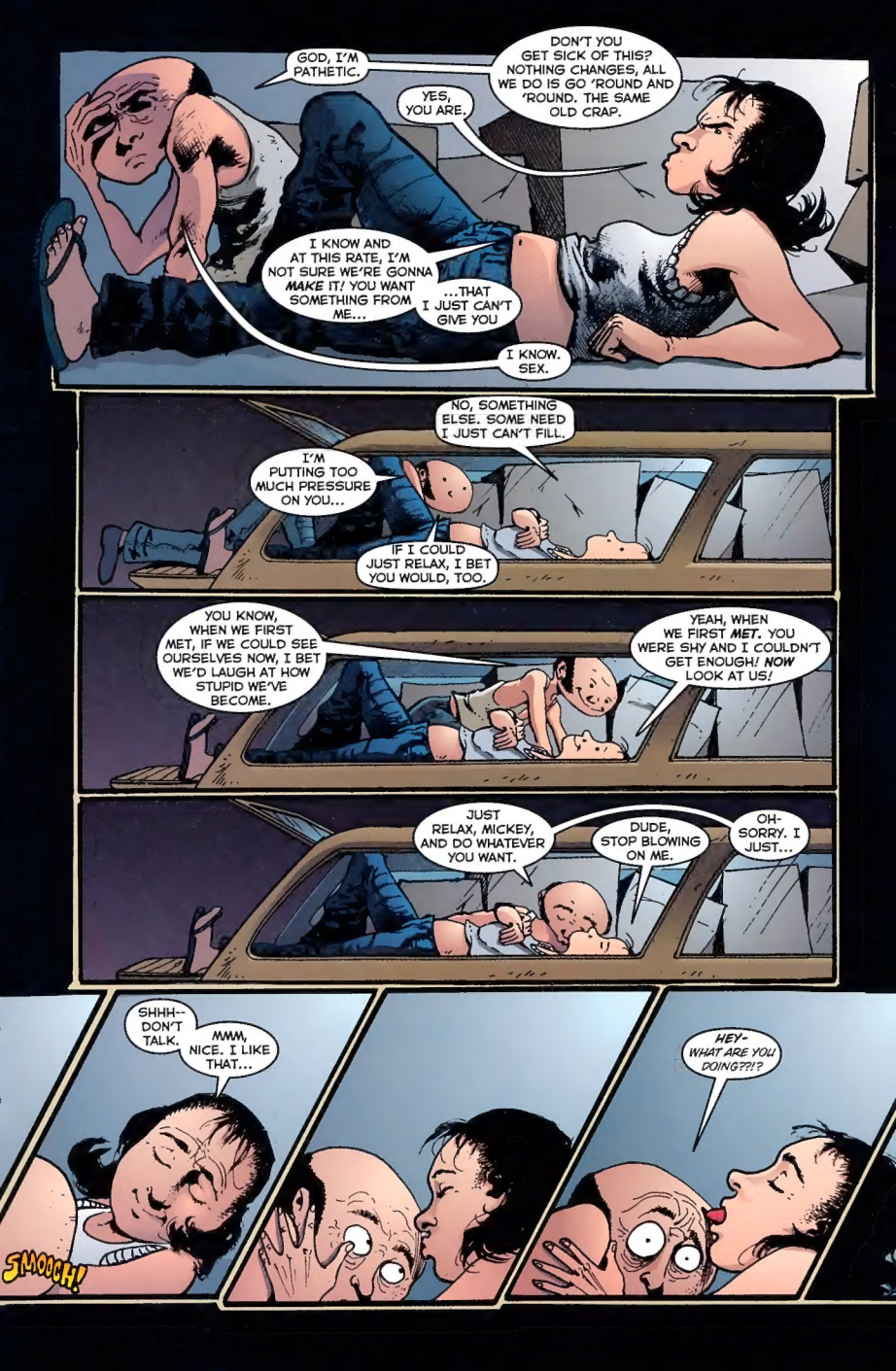


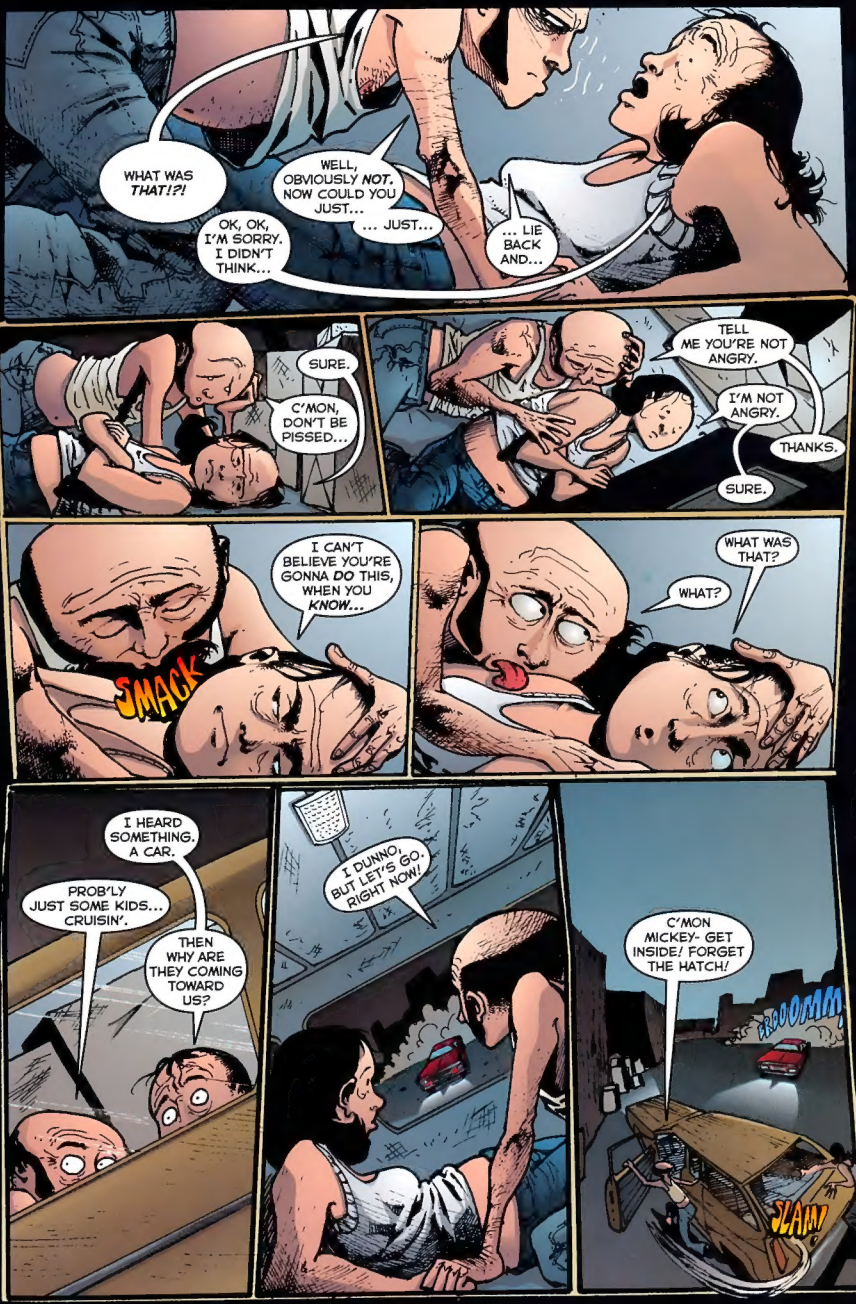
HI KIDS, MR. GONE HERE. HERE'S A STORY OF MICKEY, DUDE AND THE ONLY GUY WHO EVER SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME. HE'S CALLED... WELL YOU'LL MEET HIM SOON ENOUGH.
REMEMBER, IN MAXX 32, WHEN GLORIE OPENED AN URN OUTSIDE SARA'S BATHROOM, WHICH CAUSED THE WORLD TO END?
THIS STORY TAKES PLACE THREE DAYS BEFORE THAT.
MUSIC CUE: DVORAK'S NEW WORLD SYMPH., 2ND MVMT.
COUNTING BACKWARDS THEN...
... THIS IS THE THIRD DAY BEFORE...
... THE END OF THE WORLD.
MELODRAMATIC, HUH?
THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE IT.

THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS. C'MON, DUDE, WE'VE GOT ENOUGH. THE CAR'S FULL- LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE'RE CAUGHT!
I KNOW. JUST ONE MORE... BESIDES, STEALING BOXES FROM BEHIND GROCERY STORES IS A TRADITION. THEY EXPECT IT.
SURE, SURE- BUT THIS IS A CRAPPY PART OF TOWN, AND I DON'T FEEL SAFE HERE.
WE'RE NOT. THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT *FUN.* DANGER. SUSPENSE. ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.
ALL THAT'S *HAPPENED* SO FAR IS WE'VE BUSTED OUR ASSES MOVING, AND I'M SWEATY AND POOPED!
:SIGH:
GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT, THOUGH. MAYBE I'LL SIT DOWN- JUST FOR A SEC.

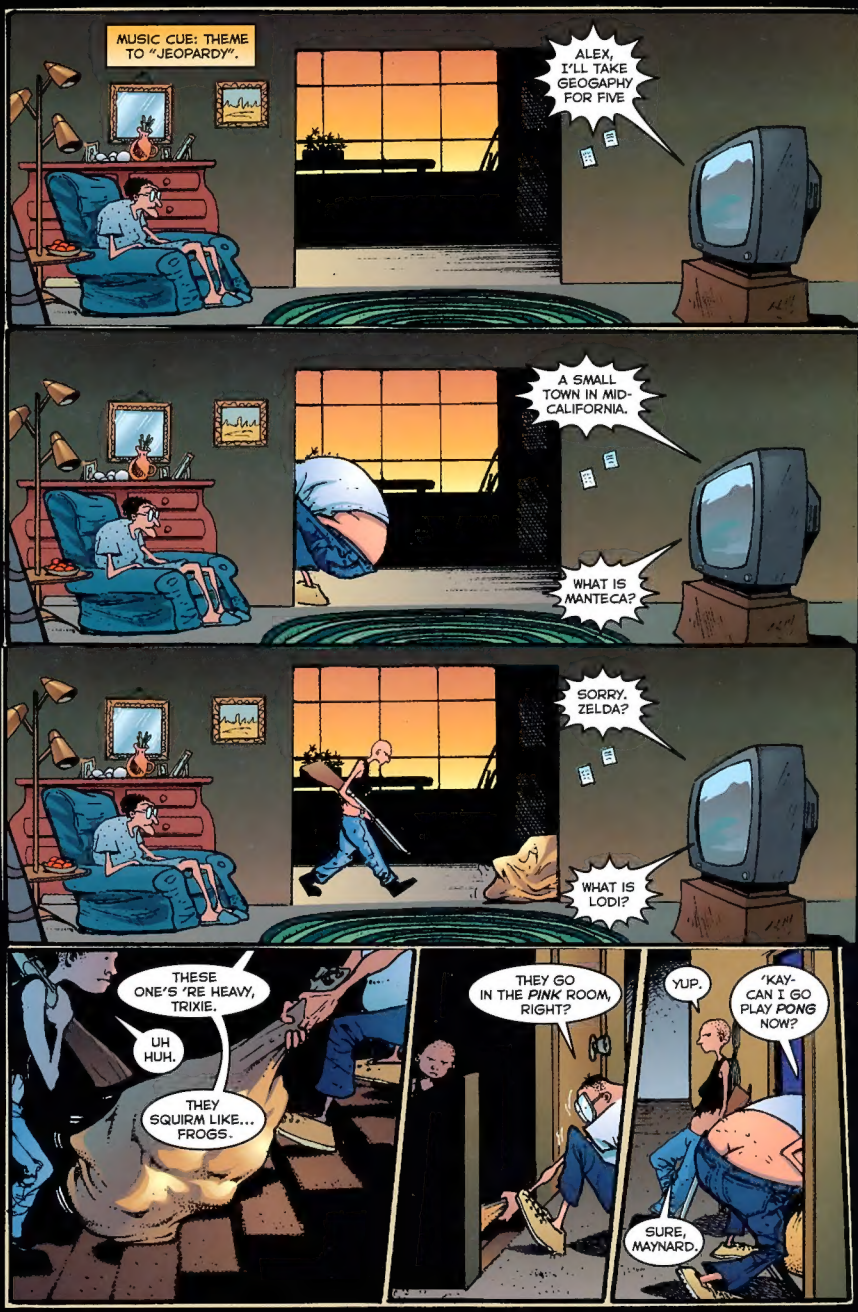

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW OUT OF SHAPE I AM! I USED TO BE ABLE TO GO ON A "BOX RUN" WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT.
UH HUH.
JUST SIT BACK AND RELAX. H'MMM. YOU SMELL GOOD...
KISS
WE CAN'T RELAX *HERE*- WE SHOULDN'T EVEN *BE* HERE,WE SHOULD GO... GO...
SMOOCH
HEY! OK, BUDDY- BACK OFF!!!
SLOBBER!
WHAT'RE YOU F@%*K'N NUTS? DO I EVEN *LOOK* LIKE I'M IN THE MOOD?!?
I'M HOT, SWEATY, AND EXHAUSTED. SO FORGET IT!!!
IT'S OK, I'M USED TO IT...
;SIGH; AW GREAT, CLUB ME OVER THE HEAD WITH THAT LOOK.
WHAT LOOK?
YOU KNOW...
YOU GOT IT ON YOUR FACE RIGHT NOW!
LOOK, MICKEY, IT'S NOT FAIR TO *ME!* THE LONGER WE'RE TOGETHER, THE LESS YOU WANT TO DO IT- I'M ABOUT MY WIT'S END!
YOU'VE BEEN AT YOUR "WIT'S END" FOR THE LAST 15 YEARS. PICK YOUR TIME AND PLACE! YOU COULD SEE IF *I'M* IN THE MOOD BEFORE YOU GO AND... CLIMB ON ME LIKE I'M SOME BIG ROCKING HORSE.

OK. LET'S JUST GO THEN. SCREW IT!!!
WAIT- NOT LIKE THIS. LET'S NOT LEAVE MAD! BUT IT'S NOT MY FAULT. YOU HAVE TO SEE THINGS FROM MY SIDE, TOO.
WHO LOOKS OUT FOR MY SIDE WHILE I COME OVER TO YOURS?
THERE- HAVE WE MADE UP YET?
NO. I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST TIME WE "MADE UP".
YOU'RE RIGHT, I'M A BITCH. YOU SHOULD LEAVE ME...
I KNOW I SHOULD INITIATE THINGS MORE, IT'S JUST...
I KNOW, YOU NEED SOME HELP!!!
OK, JUST STOP AND LISTEN FOR A SEC.
DUDE, HONEY- YOU KNOW YOU DON'T WANT ME TO- IF I'M NOT INTO IT, RIGHT?
RIGHT?
OK, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...
GO AHEAD- CLIMB ON!!! TAKE ME RIGHT HERE!!! I'LL JUST LAY HERE, AND TRY NOT TO GET IN THE WAY.
WHUMP!
THAT'S OK. I GET IT. KNOCK IT OFF.
OOPS. DID WIFEY "SPOIL THE MOOD" WITH HER NASTY WANTS?


GOD, I'M PATHETIC.
DON'T YOU GET SICK OF THIS? NOTHING CHANGES, ALL WE DO IS GO 'ROUND AND 'ROUND. THE SAME OLD CRAP.
YES, YOU ARE.
I KNOW AND AT THIS RATE, I'M NOT SURE WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT! YOU WANT SOMETHING FROM ME...
...THAT I JUST CAN'T GIVE YOU
I KNOW. SEX.
NO, SOMETHING ELSE. SOME NEED I JUST CAN'T FILL.
I'M PUTTING TOO MUCH PRESSURE ON YOU...
IF I COULD JUST RELAX, I BET YOU WOULD, TOO.
YOU KNOW, WHEN WE FIRST MET, IF WE COULD SEE OURSELVES NOW, I BET WE'D LAUGH AT HOW STUPID WE'VE BECOME.
YEAH, WHEN WE FIRST MET. YOU WERE SHY AND I COULDN'T GET ENOUGH! NOW LOOK AT US!
JUST RELAX, MICKEY, AND DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
DUDE, STOP BLOWING ON ME.
OH- SORRY. I JUST...
SHHH-- DON'T TALK.
MMM, NICE. I LIKE THAT...
SMOOCH!
HEY- WHAT ARE YOU DOING??!?

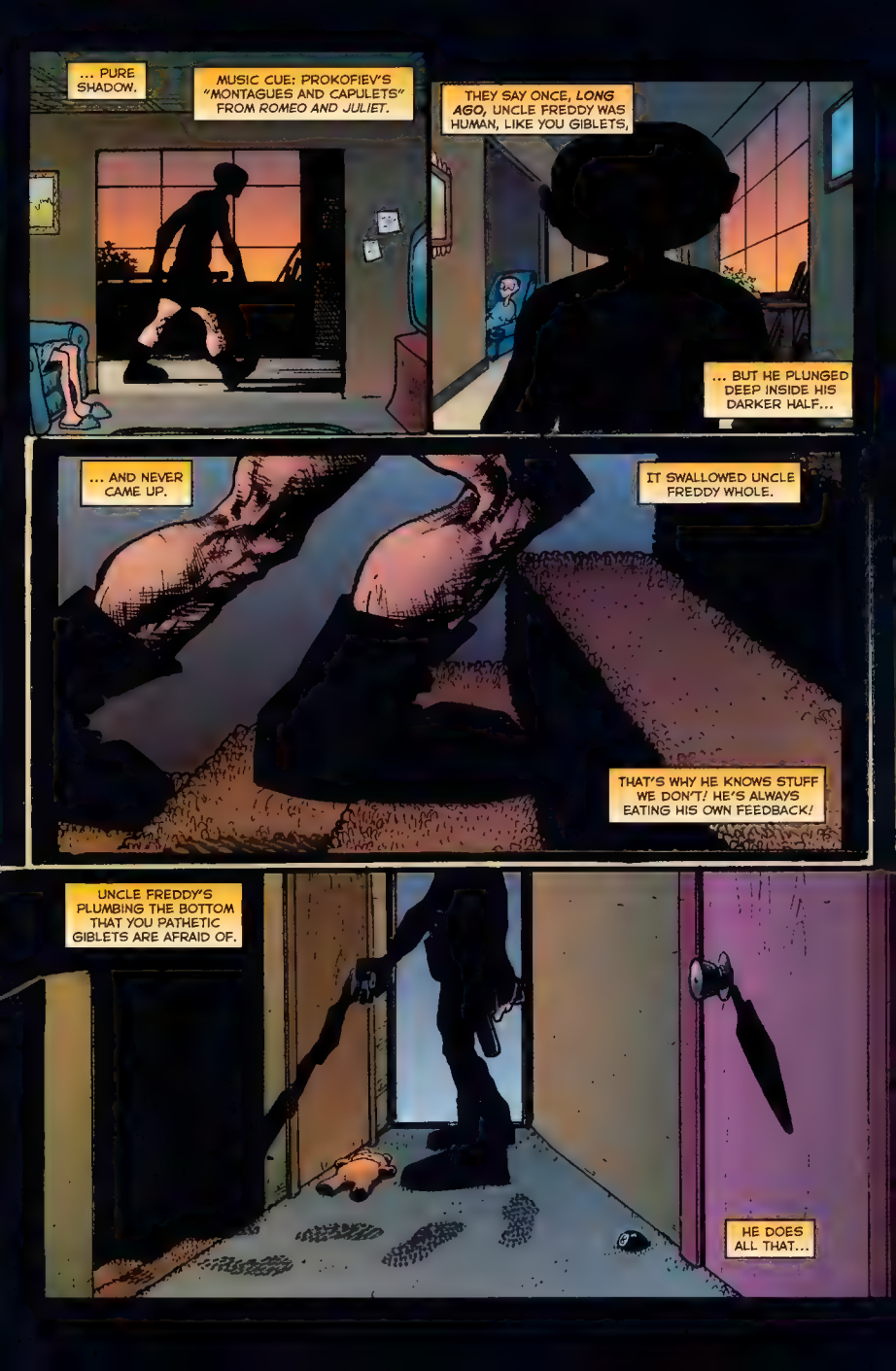

WHAT WAS THAT!?!
OK, OK, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T THINK...
WELL, OBVIOUSLY NOT. NOW COULD YOU JUST...
... JUST...
... LIE BACK AND...
SURE.
C'MON, DON'T BE PISSED...
TELL ME YOU'RE NOT ANGRY.
I'M NOT ANGRY.
THANKS.
SURE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GONNA DO THIS, WHEN YOU KNOW...
SMACK
WHAT WAS THAT?
WHAT?
I HEARD SOMETHING. A CAR.
PROB'LY JUST SOME KIDS... CRUISIN'.
THEN WHY ARE THEY COMING TOWARD US?
I DUNNO, BUT LET'S GO. RIGHT NOW!
C'MON MICKEY- GET INSIDE! FORGET THE HATCH!
VROOMM!
SLAM!

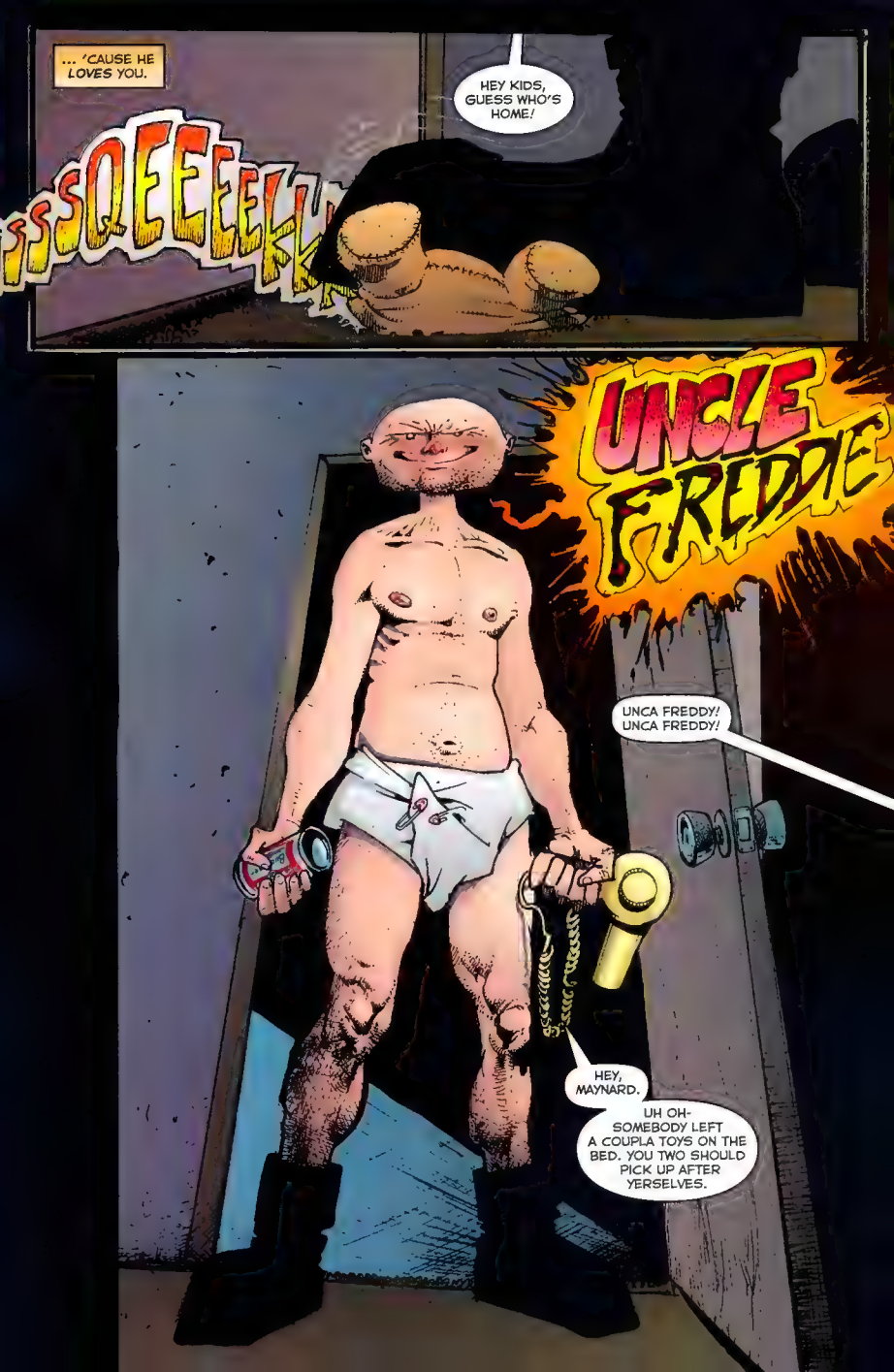
THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES

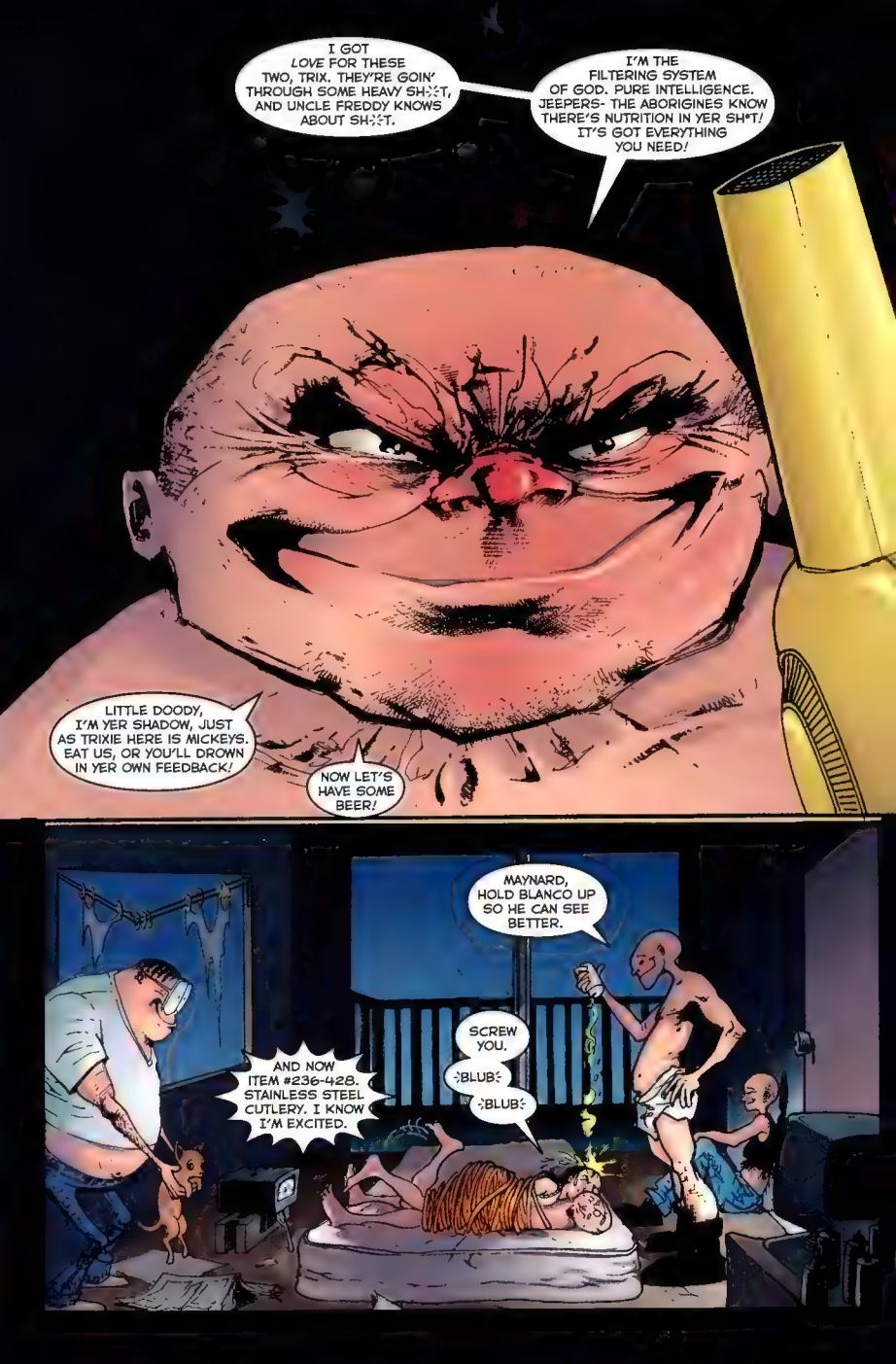

MUSIC CUE: THEME TO "JEOPARDY".
ALEX, I'LL TAKE GEOGAPHY FOR FIVE
A SMALL TOWN IN MID-CALIFORNIA.
WHAT IS MANTECA?
SORRY. ZELDA?
WHAT IS LODI?
THESE ONE'S 'RE HEAVY, TRIXIE.
UH HUH.
THEY SQUIRM LIKE... FROGS.
THEY GO IN THE *PINK* ROOM, RIGHT?
YUP.
'KAY- CAN I GO PLAY *PONG* NOW?
SURE, MAYNARD.

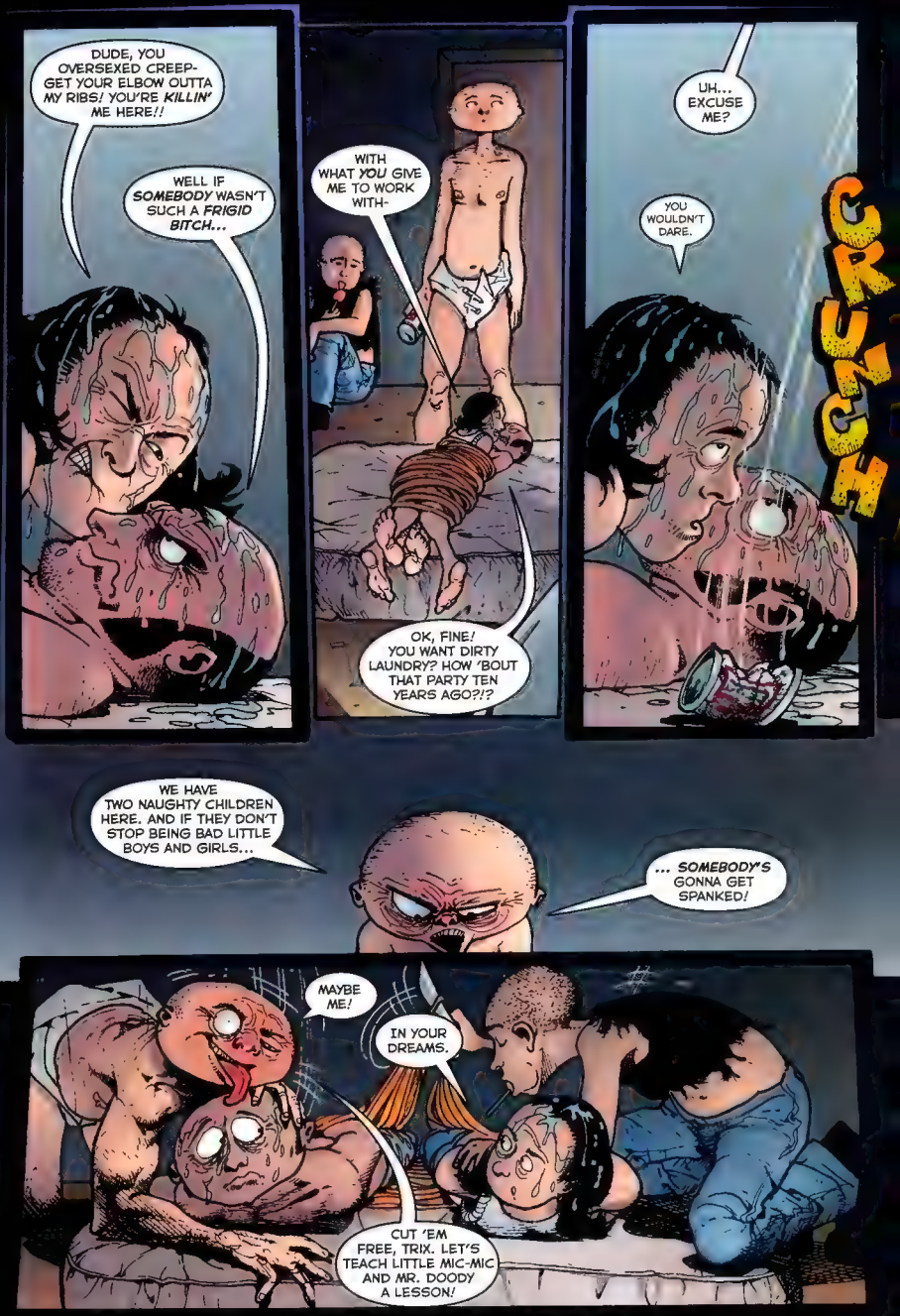
WHAT HAPPENED?
WILL YOU JUST-
SOMETHING HAPPENED!!!
SO WHAT?!? JUST STOP FREAKING OUT, OK???
HOW LONG HAVE WE BEEN HERE, ANYWAY? AND WHAT WAS ALL THAT STUFF IN THE CAR? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE CAR?
DUDE DON'T EVEN START...
LISTEN, MICKEY, THIS MIGHT BE *IT* FOR US. I JUST WANNA SAY, ABOUT THAT NIGHT AT THE PARTY SO LONG AGO-
I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT.
ME NEITHER BUT-
THEN *DROP* IT!
BUT THIS MIGHT BE OUR LAST CHANCE-
I LOVE YOU, MICKEY. I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
IF YOU'D JUST CALM DOWN AND GIVE ME A CHANCE TO THINK MAYBE WE COULD-
I THINK THIS IS HOW IT'S GONNA END... IN THIS ROOM!
OH FOR GOD'S SAKE, WILL YOU JUST F¢#KN' SHUT-
OK, KIDS, IT'S ALMOST SHOW TIME. FOLLOW ME.

ON YER BELLIES, YOU PATHETIC GIBLETS!
CRAWL LIKE THE "BABY-GIBLETS" YOU ARE!!!
HOW 'BOUT THAT COUNTER TILE, SANDY?
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DESIGN, STEVE.
ISN'T IT?
MMM HM.
YOU KNOW, LOTS OF TILES THESE DAYS ARE MADE WITH CHEAP PLASTER!
NOOOO!!!
REALLY! BUT NOT THESE...
TRIXIE, WHEN'S UNCA FREDDY GETTIN' BACK?
SHUT UP, YOU FAT F@% K!!!
....HOW LONG'S DAT?
WHO'S UNCLE-
WITH THESE, YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT SACRIFICING BEAUTY FOR QUALITY! THEY HAVE THAT EXCITING DESIGN WITH THE LITTLE HEARTS AND BOWS...
STEVE, THESE ARE SOME EXCITING TILES!!!
I KNOW I'M EXCITED; ARE YOU?
YOU'LL SEE, LI'L MICKEY...
IT'S CONTAGIOUS! GIVE US A CALL! ITEM #647-239...
PLEASE, JUST SHOOT US...
SO YOU WANNA KNOW 'BOUT UNCLE FREDDY, HUH? HE'S NOT LIKE US. HE'S...


... PURE SHADOW.
MUSIC CUE: PROKOFIEV'S "MONTAGUES AND CAPULETS" FROM ROMEO AND JULIET.
THEY SAY ONCE, LONG AGO, UNCLE FREDDY WAS HUMAN, LIKE YOU GIBLETS,
... BUT HE PLUNGED DEEP INSIDE HIS DARKER HALF...
... AND NEVER CAME UP.
IT SWALLOWED UNCLE FREDDY WHOLE.
THAT'S WHY HE KNOWS STUFF WE DON'T! HE'S ALWAYS EATING HIS OWN FEEDBACK!
UNCLE FREDDY'S PLUMBING THE BOTTOM THAT YOU PATHETIC GIBLETS ARE AFRAID OF.
HE DOES ALL THAT...


... 'CAUSE HE LOVES YOU.
HEY KIDS, GUESS WHO'S HOME!
SQEEEEK
UNCLE FREDDIE
UNCA FREDDY! UNCA FREDDY!
HEY, MAYNARD.
UH OH- SOMEBODY LEFT A COUPLA TOYS ON THE BED. YOU TWO SHOULD PICK UP AFTER YERSELVES.


I GOT LOVE FOR THESE TWO, TRIX. THEY'RE GOIN' THROUGH SOME HEAVY SH:*:T, AND UNCLE FREDDY KNOWS ABOUT SH:*:T.
I'M THE FILTERING SYSTEM OF GOD. PURE INTELLIGENCE. JEEPERS- THE ABORIGINES KNOW THERE'S NUTRITION IN YER SH*T! IT'S GOT EVERYTHING YOU NEED!
LITTLE DOODY, I'M YER SHADOW, JUST AS TRIXIE HERE IS MICKEYS. EAT US, OR YOU'LL DROWN IN YER OWN FEEDBACK!
NOW LET'S HAVE SOME BEER!
MAYNARD, HOLD BLANCO UP SO HE CAN SEE BETTER.
SCREW YOU.
:BLUB:
:BLUB:
AND NOW ITEM #236-428. STAINLESS STEEL CUTLERY. I KNOW I'M EXCITED.

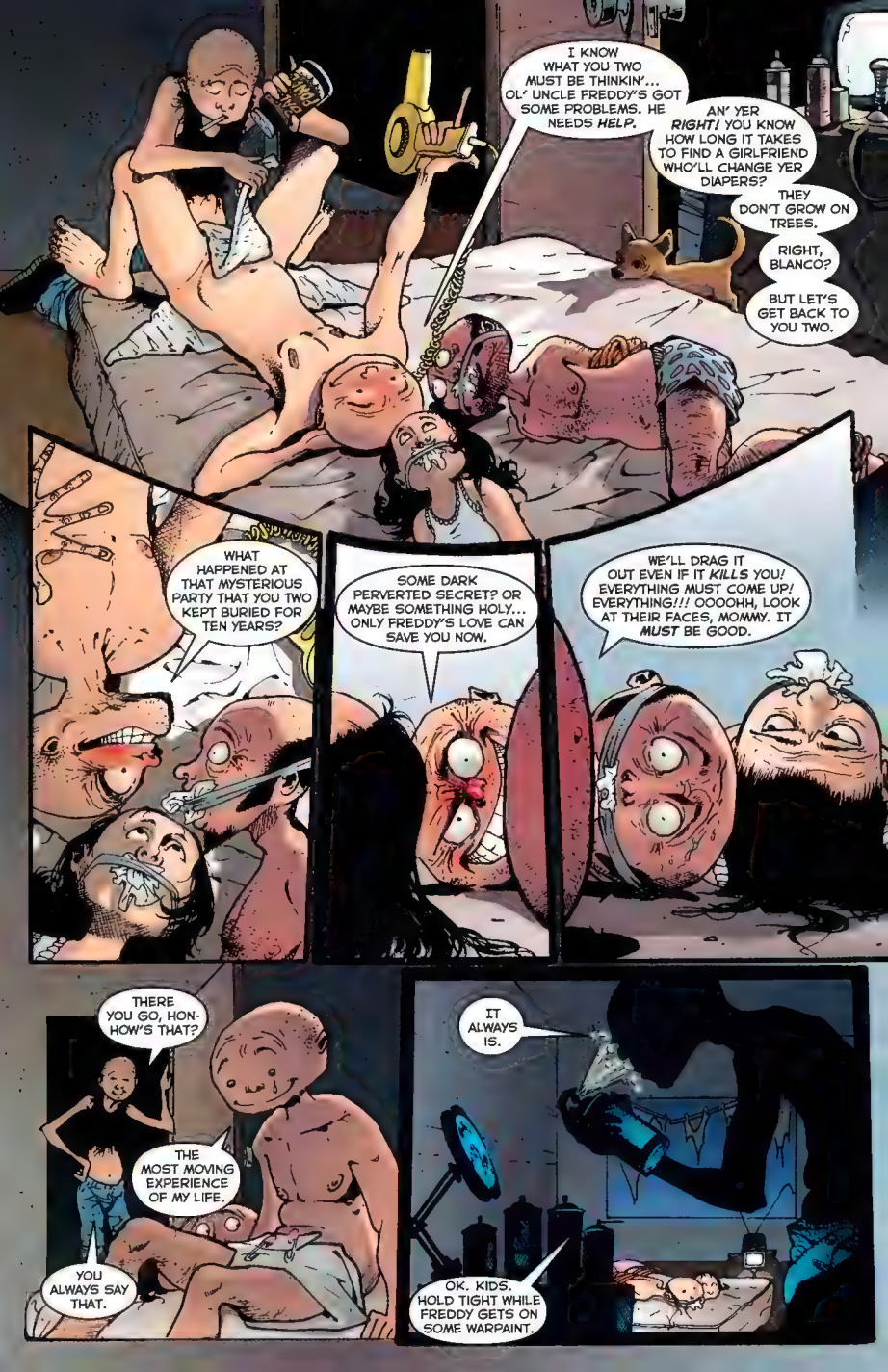

DUDE, YOU OVERSEXED CREEP- GET YOUR ELBOW OUTTA MY RIBS! YOU'RE KILLIN' ME HERE!!
WELL IF SOMEBODY WASN'T SUCH A FRIGID BITCH...
WITH WHAT YOU GIVE ME TO WORK WITH-
OK, FINE! YOU WANT DIRTY LAUNDRY? HOW 'BOUT THAT PARTY TEN YEARS AGO?!?
UH... EXCUSE ME?
YOU WOULDN'T DARE.
CRUNCH
WE HAVE TWO NAUGHTY CHILDREN HERE. AND IF THEY DON'T STOP BEING BAD LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS...
... SOMEBODY'S GONNA GET SPANKED!
MAYBE ME!
IN YOUR DREAMS.
CUT 'EM FREE, TRIX. LET'S TEACH LITTLE MIC-MIC AND MR. DOODY A LESSON!

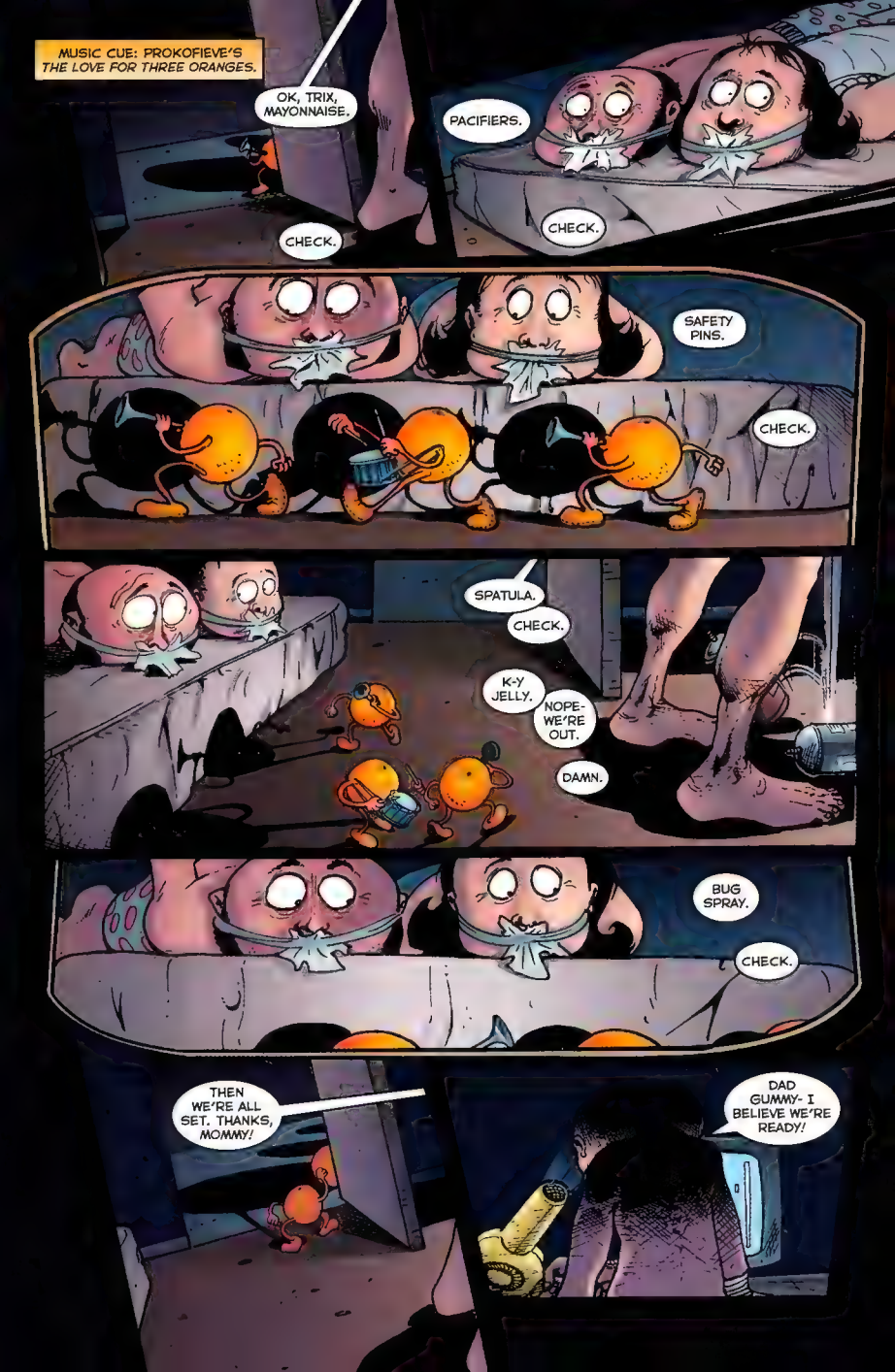
WOOO- WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME PARTY, EH, FRED?
I WANT DETAILS, SPILL IT.
NOT TALKIN'? OK, YOU LITTLE BRATS...
... DUCT TAPE IT IS!
OOOO- DUCKY TAPE! DUCKY TAPE!
LITTLE MICKEY-POO AND DOODIE-POO LIKE KEEPING SECRETS.
WAIT. WHAT WE'RE DOING, THIS...
... ISN'T RIGHT.
BLANCO.
WHEELBARROW! WHEELBARROW! WHEELBARROW!
WOOOOSSSHH!
DON'T WORRY, LI'L PAL. OUR SPECIAL TIME HAS COME.

IT'S TIME TO PLAY
WHEELBARROW
DOES MY WIDDLE BLANCO WIKE PLAYING "WHEELBARROW"?
HE DOES, HE DOES, HE DOES!
WHEELBARROW ME, UNCA FREDDY, WHEELBARROW ME!
SQUEEK SQUEEK SQUEEK
ME N' BLANCO'S HAVIN' A PRIVATE MOMENT, MAYNARD. GO PLAY PONG.
C'MON, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE...
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
ZIP
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
PLEASE.
IN TEN THOUSAND YEARS, YOU WILL SHOVEL YER OWN SH:;:T AND EAT IT, 'CAUSE YER ON RE-FEED!!!
OK, MAYNARD, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
WHEELBARROW! WHEELBARROW! WHEELBARROW!

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE... BIG POTTY! 'CAUSE A BEAR'S CATHOLIC! THAT'S CHAPTER ONE, YOU S.O.B.!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
YOU BRAINWASHED YOURSELF, YOU STUPID C@%KSUCKER!
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
I MADE *YOU* UP, YOU DIDN'T MAKE *ME* UP. YOU GOT IT BACKWARDS!
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE?
WHEELBARROW!
WHEELBARROW!
YER F%#KN' ***SEMANTIC BLOCKAGE!!!***
SEE? *YOU* DON'T EAT YER ***FEEDBACK!***
WHEELBARROW!
CRASH
WHEELB-

OOPS.
FREDDY MADE A BOO BOO.
YOU SURE DID HONEY.
NO, MAYNARD HAD A BOO BOO. I HAD AN ACCIDENT.
CHANGE BABY FREDDY, MOMMY.
GUESS.
PLOP!
HOLD IT, SPINAL JELLY. YOU AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE 'TIL WE CHANGE MY BABY'S DIAPERS. GOT IT? GOOD.
DID BABY FREDDY MAKE NUMBER ONE OR NUMBER TWO BOO BOO?


I KNOW WHAT YOU TWO MUST BE THINKIN'... OL' UNCLE FREDDY'S GOT SOME PROBLEMS. HE NEEDS *HELP.*
AN' YER *RIGHT!* YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TAKES TO FIND A GIRLFRIEND WHO'LL CHANGE YER DIAPERS?
THEY DON'T GROW ON TREES.
RIGHT, BLANCO?
BUT LET'S GET BACK TO YOU TWO.
WHAT HAPPENED AT THAT MYSTERIOUS PARTY THAT YOU TWO KEPT BURIED FOR TEN YEARS?
SOME DARK PERVERTED SECRET? OR MAYBE SOMETHING HOLY... ONLY FREDDY'S LOVE CAN SAVE YOU NOW.
WE'LL DRAG IT OUT EVEN IF IT *KILLS* YOU! EVERYTHING MUST COME UP! EVERYTHING!!! OOOOHH, LOOK AT THEIR FACES, MOMMY. IT *MUST* BE GOOD.
THERE YOU GO, HON- HOW'S THAT?
THE MOST MOVING EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE.
YOU ALWAYS SAY THAT.
IT ALWAYS IS.
OK. KIDS. HOLD TIGHT WHILE FREDDY GETS ON SOME WARPAINT.


MUSIC CUE: PROKOFIEVE'S THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES.
OK, TRIX, MAYONNAISE.
CHECK.
PACIFIERS.
CHECK.
SAFETY PINS.
CHECK.
SPATULA.
CHECK.
K-Y JELLY.
NOPE- WE'RE OUT.
DAMN.
BUG SPRAY.
CHECK.
THEN WE'RE ALL SET. THANKS, MOMMY!
DAD GUMMY- I BELIEVE WE'RE READY!

TRIXIE, MY FACE IS DRY!
LET'S BREAK OUT THE OUTFITS. WE'VE GOT A MARRIAGE TO SAVE.

Thanxx for all the e-mail, and our apologies for the OLD (MTV) E-ADDRESS IN THE INDICIA LAST ISSUE— **skieth@webinfo.net** is right, we swear! Here are a few of the many cool maxxwebsites put together by fans:

1. www.tamos.net/~maxx
2. http://www.kiva.net/~flint/maxx
3. http://pages.prodigy.com/maxx/kieth/htm
4. http://www.magma.ca/~trotsky/maxx.htm
5. http://www.du.edu/%7Esfolse/maxx.html#2

All of these are excellent, and the last one will turn you on to even more. Maxx techno-heads are the best! But please send art via snail, still—we'll let you know if our technology gets any jazzier. And let us know if you want your Maxxsite published in MxTrx.

Dear The Maxx,

I think I've learned many things in Maxx #32. This is the hustling man's comic book. I learned the money envelope switch—hey now, that's a good hustle. When the urn opened, the story started moving. Great interactions, splendid drama.

When I was back in high school, I was a waiter for some Italian restaurant, but we used to serve breakfast and I never received an amount over the price of breakfast. Now that was a lucky waitress! But, I do remember one of the waiters who got mad at one of the patrons, and he spat into the guy's spaghetti and then watched the guy eat it. That's the kind of things I remember.

I like the direction that you're going with The Maxx. It's like Twin Peaks meets Soap.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts

Hmm. I always thought that "spitting in the spaghetti" thing was just an Urban Legend.

Glorie's story was a first part, not an end. Okay, no more starting new stories until I finish the ones I've started!

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I get it. Sara's pink fairies echo the "little princess" image she got from her grandmother, and Dave sees the thing in the bathtub as a pink fairy because of his contact with Sara's Outback. The Castle of Quilts was built by Mr. Delamor, who used to tell Sara fairy tales and was last seen getting on a bus for Mars. You can breathe water in the first room, but Sara's Outback is dying of thirst since she's filled it with crap. As Sara unloaded her emotional baggage under the guidance of Artemis, she grew so light that she floated away and blew up, only to reappear as a 300-lb. white is/pink fairy/football.

O.K. I don't get it. But, I'm enthralled. One of the joys of The Maxx is your insistence on keeping us guessing. FOM had this too. Now that I think about it, all of your work has this exquisite quality: a mad fusion of Norman Rockwell and Franz Kafka. Thanks for putting out The Maxx trade paperbacks. The Maxx really lends itself to (demands) frequent rereading. The paperbacks are a great way to do this and the new art is always a treat. The I Before E collections are also pretty cool. I've had these for some time but thought that, since I was on the subject, I'd let you know how much they're appreciated.

And Speaking Of Those Abstract Pretentious Stories That Make You Feel Stupid If You Don't Get Them... I think that this little gem is a kind of Rosetta Stone for The Maxx. "And out in the back was a little wooden box." As I read this, I thought, *"Out...Back?"* A few lines later, "So he hid his feelings away in the box out back." Out-back seems to be just the place to keep a little box full of things that you don't really want to share with anyone. By the end of the story, we see the unfortunate consequences of trespassing on someone's Outback. This same concept has been more thoroughly developed and examined throughout the pages of The Maxx. You've shown us what happens when the walls of our Outback, or maybe "Dreamtime", are breached. Things get in that have no business being there, and things get out that should never see the light of day. Although, sometimes it is necessary to go in and drag what you find out into the light.

Just some miscellaneous debris I thought I'd share. Thanks again, Mr. Kieth, for telling us your wonderful stories and for your glaring appreciation of your readers.

Sincerely,
Brian R. Dixon
Upper Marlboro, Maryland

My opinion is that, when everybody knows what's going on all the time in The Maxx, we're in trouble. Not everyone agrees, though:

Dear Sam,

Maybe you're too close to it to see how many doors you open every ish—and then never take us through, or never close. Are the air whales an ancient tribe, or just animals? What do they believe about the roles of the sexes, and time? I think Artie and Gone are the same person (that is, good AND bad), because who do you know who's all one thing or the other? Did Julie take no joy in her son's birth (is there no joy, no peace for anyone for even a moment in the Maxx universe)?

Dave Maurer

Yer makin' my head hurt!

Dear Sam Kieth,

I have just finished reading #31, and it blew me away. We get to see a real personal side of a character named Megan (I can hardly wait to see if "Megan" is Julie Winters). But it's these peeks into the personal lives of the characters that keep me coming back to The Maxx.

I know I don't fit the "normal" demographic of the average Maxx reader (I am a 26-year-old "African-American" male), but

I can still relate to all the characters. Just by the color of my skin, I am made to feel like an outcast similar to Sara or Julie. The Maxx goes where no comic book has gone before because it deals with reality! Some people find your comic "hard to understand", but that's the point: can we fully understand this backwards society, and how it relates to us and our personal problems? Some people have even tried to analyze The Maxx, but if you try to do so, you will only get more confused! Can we actually analyze this society and make sense out of it? No, I don't think so. To fully appreciate The Maxx, you have to go with the flow, and never try to predict what's going to happen next (after all, you probably don't know yourself what's going to happen, do you?).

Keep up the good work, and don't change the format of The Maxx for anyone!

True Mxhd since Day One!
Brian Keith

MURRAY "Murrish" Brenna– Ontar, CA

Dear Fellow Mxhds,

I have some bad news for you all, especially for our fellow reader and letter writer Michael Spera. Yes, you too are a geek! But that's OK, because so am I. Even the almighty Maxx Oversoul Sam Kieth is a geek and if he won't admit it, he just hasn't gotten in touch with his inner geekness as of yet.

I came to this realization at my first big comic book convention. As I was walking and gawking, I said to my girlfriend, "Boy, there sure are nerdy geekoids here." Then she said, "Yep, but you're the biggest comic geekoid I know." And my own coolness came crashing down. Now I see that if it wasn't for these flakes looking for escapism, the whole comic and sci-fi industry would grind to a standstill. So God bless their little nerdy hearts. Cuz without them, Sammy baby would be washing dishes or something, and our lives would be mind-numbingly dull.

There are a lot of lonely people in the world with low self-esteem. Many of them like The Maxx because they can relate to the characters. As a freshman in high school, there was a guy I used to bully and pick on. When I became a senior, I realized what a jerk I had been. So I tried to make up for it by being nice to the nerdy-looking guy, and discovered he was really pretty cool. So everyone go out and meet a nerd and remember: it's better to be a geek than a jerk that doesn't know he's a geek.

Later, mutant monkeys,
Norvin Landrum
Bellingham, WA

Well put.

Dear Sam,

After months of careful reaseach, I have concluded that you are none other than the great Dr. Seuss. Gotcha!!

David Buchan-Terrell

You must be talking to my friend, Scott Dunbier.

Très cher Monsieur Kieth,

When I was young, I used to read Marvel Comics, and the thing I liked the most was the X-Men when they were drawn by John Byrne. Later I left the comics because I didn't appreciate the art (I know I'm wrong, but I thought they all looked the same).

One day, a friend of mine showed me The Maxx on MTV, and I said: "Damn! Damn! Damn! Damn!!!" I became obsessed and wanted to get the comic. Once I got 'em, I was pleased to see that the cartoon looked like the comic and vice-versa. In fact, there were not many illustrators I liked except Dave McKean, Bill Sienkiewicz, Kent Williams, George Pratt and Moebius... until I took your art in the face! And no need to talk about the story—I'm still smashin' my head against the wall because of it!

I'm so happy to be a Mxhd and I can't wait for the next issues. Never a comic touched me like this before I read The Maxx, and I think that it's a rare thing to see a comic so intelligent, brilliant and f***ed-up as The Maxx is (**you got that right**). I won't go on to celebrate your work and the people you do work with cuz I think other Mxhds did it very well.

I can't add better except thank you very much and keep on kickin' my Frenchy ass! Merçi Monsieur et chapeaux bas!

Meep!
V
Paris, France

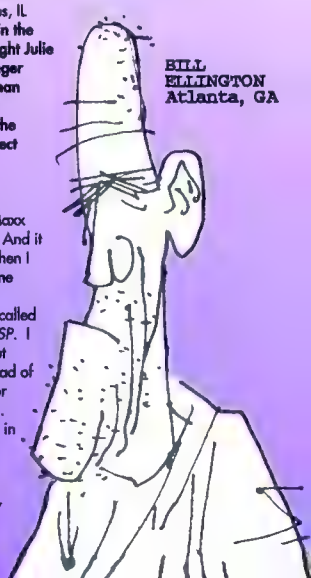
You have good taste in illustrators, but I'm a cartoonist, not an illustrator. No false modesty intended—I just know my limits. Those guys are in a different class. But thanks.

Dear Sam,

I don't have issues 11 or 12, but I think they got reversed in my copy of the second trade. Does #12 start with a decaying hand falling to the ground? Does issue #11 start with a big painting of a plane? If so, then somebody screwed up.

Jim Steensen
St. Charles, IL

I did reverse those in the TPB, because I thought Julie leaving was a stronger emotional ending than Gone's head being squished. Besides, the reversal doesn't affect continuity.



BILL ELLINGTON
Atlanta, GA

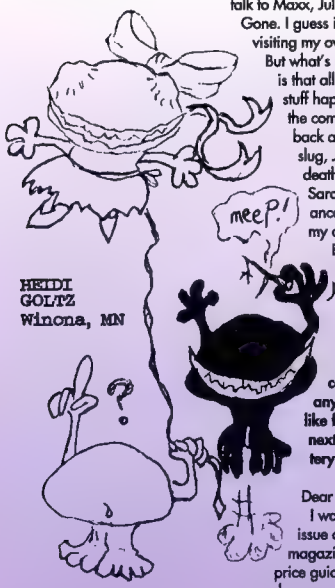
Sam,

I collected The Maxx from issues 1 to 20. And it was awesome. But then I was distracted. Let me explain.

I read this book called *Lessons in Instant ESP*. I know, corny title, but great book. In it I read of something the author called, "Your Place". It's like a safe world in your mind. Plus it gives a suggested meditation to reach this place. I instantly thought of The Maxx and the

Outback, so I tried it.

When I did it, it was like I was in the comic. I started under the underpass with Sara. And I could walk around the city and talk to Maxx, Julie, or even Gone. I guess it's kinda like visiting my own Outback. But what's really weird is that all the same stuff happened as in the comic. I was back at #20, but the slug, Julie's false death and now Sara's disappearance all were in my dream before I ever read #21-30!



HEIDI
GOLTZ
Winona, MN

Dave Barker
Santa Clara, CA

Yeah, but can you do anything <u>useful</u>, like foresee the next winning lottery numbers?

Dear Sam,

I was reading an issue of Toy Fare magazine and in the price guide it said that people can get a Bag of Isz with one red one if you are a member of the McFarlane Collectors Club.

(1) Is this true?
(2) The price guide doesn't mention the price, so what is it?
(3) Is joining the Collectors Club the only way to get the Bag of Isz?
(4) If yes, how would I do that?

Devoted Mxhd,
Dustin Curtis
Sterling, VA

(1) Write to Todd.
(2) Write to Todd.
(3) Write to Todd.
(4) Write to... well, you get the idea...

Sam,

Just read #31. *Rebecca*, huh?

May your day be full of

- ❑ sunshine
- ❑ flowers
- ❑ trouble
- ❑ pigpoop. (I haven't checked one—I won't know which one to use until I know whether you print my letter or not.)

Racheal

[NO WE DIDN'T SPELL IT WRONG]
My answer's in the indicia.

Dear Sam,

I loved the FF and UlMoose story—any chance of seeing them again? Come on, I'm sure Dave's just itching with anticipation to do another story. I hope. Ever notice how Dave Feiss can only draw three different noses?

All right! The original Maxx is back! I like Norbert, but Dave is THE Maxx! Did you name him after Dave Feiss? And, more importantly, do you hallucinate a lot? If not, how do you come up with this stuff? What is going on in that head of yours? If I could visit people's Outbacks, yours would be the first on my list. I think that would be an amazing experience that no drug could ever accomplish. The cover of #30 was brilliant, by the way.

Enjoying the coffee,
Daudi Carrodeguas
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Dave can draw all sorts of noses; he just likes those three. And you may not be so anxious to get into my head after you read <u>this</u> issue...

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Salutations! As an anti-comicbook kind of girl, I was not particularly attracted to reading The Maxx, but after watching all of the episodes, and reading a few issues, I was enchanted by the fact that The Maxx was so metaphorical. It is nice to see that not all comics fall into the stereotype of scantilly-clad, large-breasted women and mindless violence.

The irony and intelligence behind The Maxx is remarkable. You are truly a talented man. Thank you for turning me away from my anti-comic ways. I now know it's perfectly okay for an 18-year-old female to read comics.

Yours truly in reality/fantasy,
Amanda D. Galen
Newcastle, ONT, Canada

Dear Sam,

I just finished reading #31 and I must say I never would have guessed an Is. The letters page contained the usual gripes about @$$heads, but the main reason I read the letters is that there are people who were sexually abused just like me. I have always been picked on and held down by everyone. So when I started reading The Maxx, and Julie, Sara, and Mr. Gone had similar problems of sexual abuse and being abandoned, I felt close to them. So as long as you stay true to these characters, I'll continue to read your book.

Mxhd for life,
Darren Wagner

Thanks.

NATHAN BIRCHFIELD
Portland, OR

Hey, Sam!

The Maxx is the only comic book I collect, not cause I'm not well versed in comic book land, but because I tried the Rest and you're the Best! My boyfriend mocks this comic book, but I think he's just mad cause he didn't discover it first. Because he borrowed the whole set from me two weeks ago only proves my conclusion. Now he buys them for me before I can get to them, just so he can read 'em without me knowing. I see the misplaced tape holding them in.

On a personal note, your comic book reinforced my self-esteem about my art talent, and now I have only a little self doubt (but that's healthy) about being able to make it in the real world. Thanx for your unknowing support, and thanx for creating such super characters that remind me of certain parts of human nature. (The good parts, and the real parts.) Where I live it's hard to get ahead, but I'm going to try my hardest to make it, and maybe I will.

Luck in all you do,
Sixteen year old Laura Fowler
New York

Hang in there—if I can do it, anyone can!!

To Mr. Sam Kieth,

Me and my Sister Hill are both in love with your work on the Maxx. We first got into it when it was the cartoon series on MTV. Just recently, we have discovered your Maxx comics. My sister is already a devoted collector. I myself have a larger interest in your FOM series. Oh yeah—and what's the deal in Maxx #2? Is that guy in the beginning Tommy, Glorie's friend? 'Cause it looks a lot like Ira from FOM.

Sincerely,
Julia Maddin
Mississauga, ONT, Canada

That's because I can only draw two kinds of guys...

Dear Sam,

I've been following The Maxx since #1, but I'm not bitter enough to say "I was into The Maxx before all the rest of you poseurs" cause I probably got into The Maxx by going "WOW IMAGE FIRST ISSUE! MUST BUY! WILL BE WORTH MONEY! WHO CARES ABOUT CONTENT!" But, what can I say—I've been hooked since then (except for the elusive #15 that I would give anything for %^&*@$).

I, like most readers (who probably won't admit it), learn most of the story line from MxTrx. But I must criticize some letters you print! You'll print pointless letters of some people saying, "My letters never get printed! Your book kixz ass! Punk Rock!" or you'll sometimes print letters saying "I'm the coolest person who reads Maxx... everyone else is a geek! Cutting other people down makes me feel superior to others blah blablah blah blah etc. etc." Well, I just wanted to write in to say: Stop the letter wars, people! You probably don't even know the people... and even if they are ignorant, don't go cutting them down in YOUR letters! Well, u see my point. If you don't, the point is—Unity! We're all Mxhds here!

OK, I've said too much.

SKAtanic01

P.S. My letters never get printed! Your mag kixz ass! Punk Rock!

Sam,

Holy Powdered Donuts! With Issue #30, your comic jumped to the top of my "must read" list. Why? Well, because you put a Barry Manilow song in the story. A good comic just can't have enough Barry Manilow in it, which, I might point out, is something The Maxx has been sorely lacking. I'm sure if you research the sales for this issue, it'll provide support for continuing this trend in the future.

With this in mind, I would like to request "Copa Cabana" or "Mandy" as the next Barry Manilow song to appear in The Maxx. Hopefully, your coming-out-of-the-closet will help give strength and courage to other Barry Manilow fans to do the same. You, Sir, are a true American hero. Thank you.

Love in Barry,
Thomas James Harrington
Sumerduck, VA

PS: How about a B.M. guest appearance similar to what you did with Pitt earlier in the series?

Oo, gee—wouldn't that be too much of a good thing, maybe?

Hi Mr. Kieth,

I just wanted to say that The Maxx is one of the best comics going. It's weird, the art is great and most of all, IT HAS A BIG PURPLE FREAK IN IT!!! **[Sounds like my bathroom...]** In case ya didn't know already, your art has been great and the thing I admire most is the way it comes out when you want it to. I know I might have to go a few months without it, but that shows that you aren't out to milk us fan boys by putting out a comic with rushed art and cruddy storylines. Keep up the good work.

Oh yeh, will you ever be coming to Ireland??? Cause we never have any conventions or anything and I really wanna meet some comic artists/writers/inkers/teaboys.

Take care,
Paul Byrne
Ireland

I'd love to go to Ireland. OK, I lied—I never go anywhere. But if I did, I'd go to Ireland.

What's a teaboy?

Hello Sam—

FOM 2 was very cool. I showed it to a girlfriend, but after that, she never came to my house again **[been there...]**.

Your comic didn't help me get through the hard times, but I sure had a good time reading them.

Although I strongly care about animal rights, I just killed a gnat with #31. I hope you don't mind.

Johnny
Den Bosch, Holland

We heard from several folks in Holland this month—cool.

I always felt I never gave the female characters a fair shake in FOM 2 & 3. It's something I've always regretted. Sigh. Oh well...

dear sam...

I hope this is really getting to you, Sam, and not some secretary who weeds out your e-mails looking only for... something in particular.

I know that my opinion has absolutely no value except as another mark on the bedpost of gushing-over-The-Maxx e-mails, but I'll persist anyhow...

Sam, do you know what you've done here? Can you even fathom how much The Maxx means to people? You have done something that cannot even be explained in my level of vocabulary. I'm trying to do the comics thing, too, trying to be a comic artist. But a lot of people are, you know. Heck, I don't think I've seen anything so insightful and true and just plain beautiful as The Maxx is, and I don't think it'll happen again, either. You have done something absolutely remarkable, Sam. You have created intelligence and soul compassion in an industry of trendy actionbattles and bitsybunny funnies.

Congratulations.

Intensifiedly Yours,
amy :)

Thanks for the compliments, Amy. And keep drawing!

The person who opens the mail, by the way, is not "some secretary" who doesn't care about Mxhds—it's the Head Gardener (if you read #32, you know who that is).

Hey, Sam!

I'm looking at #31, and you and the guys did a great job on it. And have I mentioned lately that the book is looking and sounding great? Well, it is. I wondered how making Sara vanish was gonna play out, given that you had put so much effort into developing her, but I LOVE having her come back as a giant is!

"Kalamazoo" is an interesting way to go. Is Megan, with her evil door and love of Rebecca really Julia? And setting it in Michigan certainly caught my attention.

Talk to you later.
William Messner-Loebs
Detroit, MI

Thanks, buddy—I had a great teacher.

eyed, caped "student of the mystic arts," I realize a lot of readers never could accept the headless Gone, never mind a repentent and soul-scarred Artie. But the only possible way to progress with his character was to destroy his body in this dimension.

Maxx #26 was easily one of your most affecting and honest works, serving both to demystify the Gone character and enhance it. Although what happened with his aunt was terrifying, the most poignant moment for me was the fate of his son Phred. Having lost a son myself, I can tell you that it's difficult, if not impossible, to recover from that. And—I almost missed it—Gone's visit to the Australian Outback and mingling with other children like Phred finally revealed the origin of those Isz/fairies.

I could go on and on but you get the basic gist. I don't know where you originally came up with these ideas (I've been pouring over about 20 issues' worth of letters with their various theories), but one thing is obvious: from a literary standpoint, The Maxx has no comic parallel. Keep up the amazing work. And thank you.

Fan for life,
even if the next Maxx is a 3-legged chihuahua,
Jason Carter

Chihuahua? Have you been reading that ESP book? Check out this issue!

Sam—

A few questions that need to be answered:

(1) What were the words that made Gone pass out during his second marriage? You never told us.

(2) If Megan is Julie, does this crush on the Amazon Soccer Queen of Love mean that Julie may be bisexual, or was it more of an adoration/idolization thing?

(3) Isz come from Julie's Outback. But why do they so closely resemble Phred and the eye-less Aboriginal children of Gone's experiences?

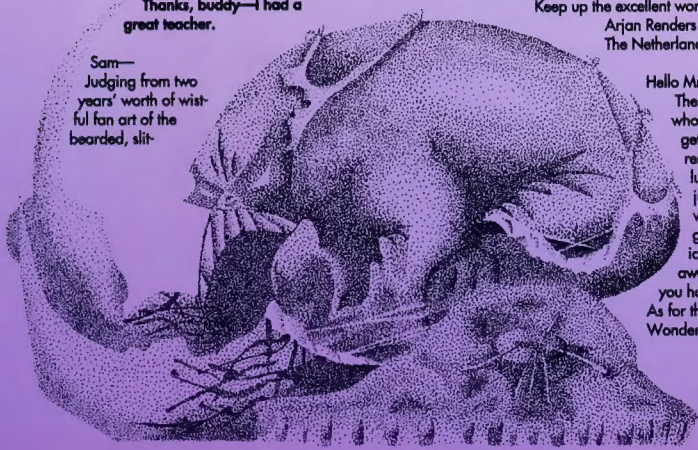
Jessy Kendall

(1) That's a secret.
(2) That's a secret.
(3) See above letter.

Dear Sam,

I would like to say that W. Keith Work (who wrote a letter in #31) does have some valid points. I especially like his idea to focus on Ira and Charley some more. Their story in FOM was really awesome. I would definitely like to see more of them in future issues.

Keep up the excellent work
Arjan Renders
The Netherlands



Sam—

Judging from two years' worth of wistful fan art of the bearded, slit-

Hello Mr. Kieth,

The problem I see is that the whole "Outback" concept is getting too complex. The current story is way too convoluted. But your characters just suck me into their world—a true hallmark of a great writer. This metaphysical Outback stuff may get away from you at times, but you have characters down pat. As for the library girl, Megan: Wonderful story. Please finish it!

Take care,
Tony Vance

JAKE EISENBERGER
Hamilton, Ont, Canada

This Megan thing won't die. Guess I'm gonna have to...

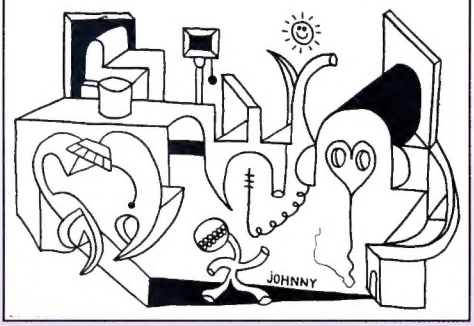
Dear Sam,

My thoughts on #32: good to see Glorie back. I'm not gonna lie and say I wondered what had happened to her since the first story arc, but hey, it was cool to see how she'd changed (and also how she hadn't changed) over those ten yers. Nice dream sequence, too, and it was kind of funny, but pretty sad to see she was still stuck with Tommy. I'm sure she can do better once she gets her self-confidence up. So, is Mac her dad, or what? He seems to know a little too much about her to be just some guy who knew her dad. Just a guess... it would be satisfying to see someone wipe the floor with that sleazy "dry cleaner" guy. Well drawn, he is—one look and you know what type of person he is.

Yeah, I'm a sucker for these one-issue excursions outside the main story arc. Since we no longer have FOM, I guess these little excursions are going to intrude upon The Maxx proper more often, but that's cool. Anyways, at least they are linked into the actual storyline, whereas FOM is completely unrelated and (it would seem) more personal... which is not to say that you perhaps do some personal work in Maxx itself... but that's your little secret. :)

Keep up
the good work,
Sam Birbeck
Adelaide,
Australia

"Johnny"– Den Bosch, Holland



Dear Mr. Kieth,

I just read #32, and it's great and everything, but am I the only one who thinks all this recent stuff is just a little rushed? I mean, you were doing the Sara story for a while, and that was good, but then you sort of cut it off. Okay, we can heal, but then you gave us three issues, each one starting a different story, with the regular characters trying to squeeze as much plot as they can in between. You seem to be trying to cram it all in before... well, something. Just slow down a bit. Let us enjoy the story. Stop and smell Fred Flower.

On a similar note, you said that you wouldn't continue the Megan story. Why not? "Do we really need three more issues just to see a girl grow up enough to walk through an evil door of puberty and cross the street into adulthood?" you said. YES! Megan is an interesting character; she has all the insecurities and weaknesses that Julie could never show without using someone else's name. If Julie is a lesbian, and I'm not saying that she is, then that would explain a lot. The only men she is close to are Maxx, her friend, and Gone, her enemy. You might add her son, but they aren't all that close. Maybe the reason she was so bitter once her Outback was healed is that she came close to dealing with that part of herself and couldn't handle it. She is pretty much in the closet. It might also go a little way toward explaining why the Isz all look like that weird diagram of the female reproductive system, only with feet (she did go to that health class, after all). But maybe I'm wrong.

Anyway,
Steve Clark
Collegeville, PA

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I'm writing to you again because I'M MAD AS HELL!!! I simply cannot believe that you have cancelled one of the most thought-provoking, most well-scripted comic books being produced on the market today! I am, of course, referring to FOM, one of the few comics I buy solely for the writing first and the art (great as it is) second. What evil deity has possessed you to do such a thing, Mr. Kieth?! FOM cannot die so soon after its birth! It hasn't had time enough to live and breathe and become what it was shaping out to be: its own unique book.

A Devoted
FOM and Mxhd,
Timothy Stark
Walterboro, SC

FOM isn't gone, just morphed into the regular Maxx book. Finding a way to do that has bumfuzzled some of the fans, though. Read on.

Hey Sam,

Though I'm enjoying the little stories you've been telling lately, I'm getting a little tired of two pages per ish of actually furthering the Maxx plot, and the rest some seemingly unrelated story. Anyway I have a few questions:

(1) Does everyone's Maxx wear the same type of mask, or does Norbert just look like that because Sara saw Julie's Maxx when she was young?

(2) I thought the urn had been dumped off the pier. How did it get in Sara's basement?

(3) What's up with those bubbles?

Thanks for bringing back the old Maxx, even though it was kinda mean.

A longtime Mxhd,
Brian Woods
Clinton Twp., MI

(1) The latter.

(2) Maybe it still is under the pier. Maybe Sara and the gang

only think they've got the real urn.

(3) Bubbles/water/womb/birth/Sara. When Glorie opened that urn, the world as we know it imploded. Now time is no longer linear, but dependent upon perception. Bubbles are the only safe route to realities. Right now, we're visiting Glorie's and Mickey's and Dude's. Maxx and Julie will show up, I promise. Just relax. Be patient. Go with it, like Brian Keith said earlier! It'll all make what we here laughingly call "sense" in the end.

Sam,

This two-page Maxx story followed by a 20-page back-up is irritating. And the back-ups feel clipped. The latest felt like there was a page missing.

But I really do love the book. Honest. It's the format I don't like. I guess nothing but two books would make me happy.

Rev. Keith Lee
Alberta, Canada

I agree that recently I've gotten into a habit of starting stories and not finishing them. This is partly a reflection of my own insecurity and lack of faith in them. And my distractibility... But you fans and some of my other friends have inspired me to get back to business and finish up what I've started.

So where are we? Basically, we've got four story threads going: Maxx and Julie, Megan, Glorie, and Mickey and Dude. Frankly, most of my interest right now is in the last three, and it's hard for me to give you a good story when I'm uninspired by the subject or the characters. It's not that I want to forget about Maxx and Julie and the gang; it's just that these other characters' stories are bursting around in my head, begging to be told.

So hang on and be patient with these new directions—we'll weave these loose strands together somehow. And let me know if you have ideas about how to keep Maxx, Julie et al. around without making the stories be just about them.

hey sam,

The Maxx is the stand-out book in my comic repertoire. I'd grown rather sick of comics and their stereotypical storylines. In fact, before The Maxx came out, I had given up collecting after eight dedicated years. But, somehow, I found the book interesting and decided to give it a shot.

This story is amazing! I'm still hooked in.

I got scared a little while ago, however. I started seeing The Maxx become mainstream—posters, t-shirts, a movie! All of which were great. But what I liked about this book was the intimacy of book to fan. With all the exposure the book was getting, I was sure that the relationship was going to get raped, leaving yourself and us fans reclusive and ever-distancing.

You manage to carry your book as an anthem to being one of us, always considerate not to hurt anyone's feelings or disrespect their opinions. In return, your fans trust you. It's a nice, warm relationship. Thank God it stayed that way.

The Maxx is more than a book. The pages of doodles and letters make it feel like OUR book.

Thanks.

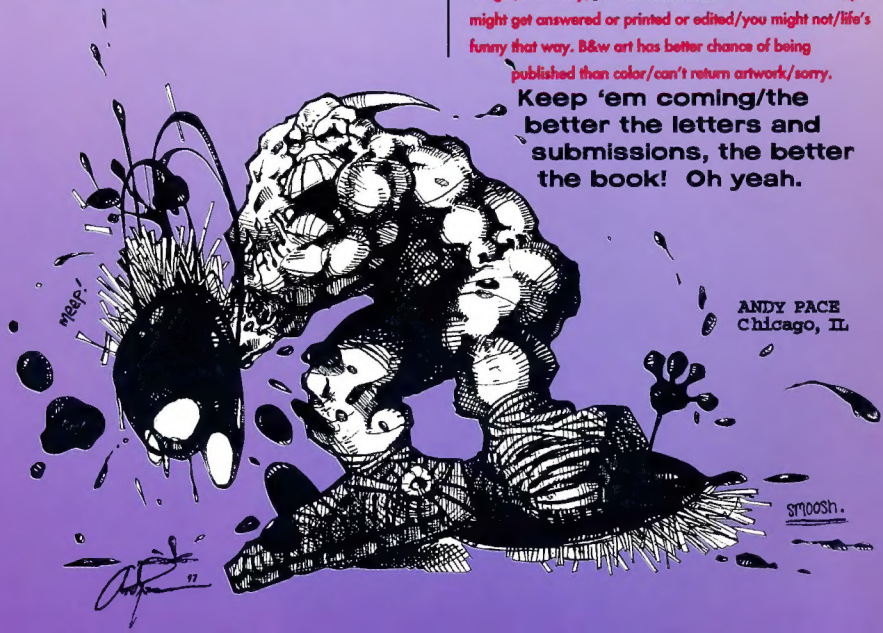
Montani
Franklin, MA

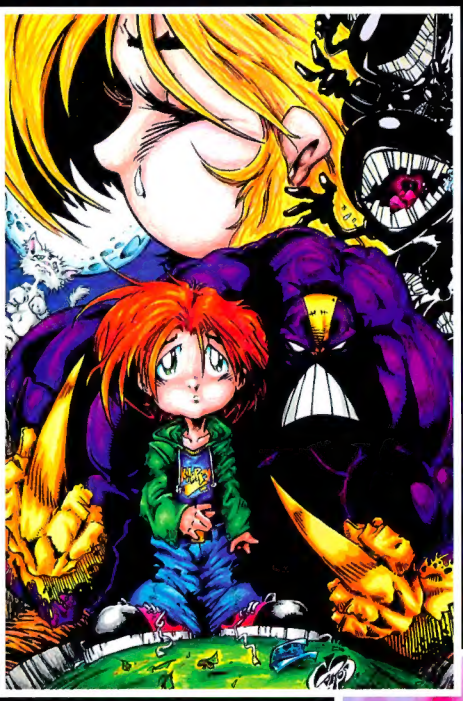
Thank you. I needed that.

PS/HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS WE GET ASKED ALL THE TIME:

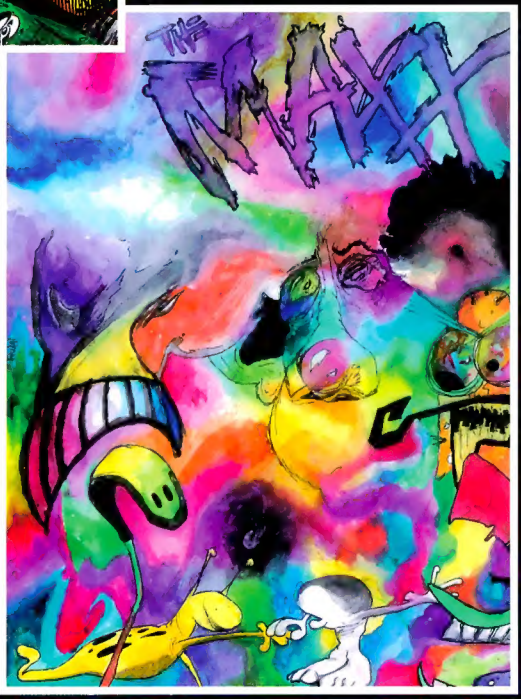
No subscriptions or retail sales available/sorry. E-mail is cool/include name & city please/we don't print e-mail addresses unless requested. Use "Head-to-Head" to find back issues/fan clubs/whatever (use the address in the indicia)/postcards are cheap and easy like us/WRITE LEGIBLY. No we don't print all the letters or art we get/too many/yes SAM DOES read them ALL/you might get answered or printed or edited/you might not/life's funny that way. B&w art has better chance of being published than color/can't return artwork/sorry.

Keep 'em coming/the better the letters and submissions, the better the book! Oh yeah.





DANIEL CAMPOS
El Paso, TX
Colors by Leonor Carlos



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